



BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY KATE COLLINS

Mike and Daisy Wight of Broughman Builders Inc. in Ellsworth discuss their involvement in "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition." The company will be the builder of the new Milbridge home of the Ray-Smith family.

Ellsworth company ready for 'Super Bowl of building'

BY AIMEE DOLLOFF
OF THE NEWS STAFF

ELLSWORTH — After building a playground at his daughter's school two years ago, Mike Wight said he felt what it truly means to give.

"It just warmed your heart," Wight, owner of Broughman Builders Inc. in Ellsworth, said Friday.

Now, he's ready to help out again. Only this time, the project's a little more extreme.

Describing his daughter's school, Wight, 37, explained that "Sally went to a Montessori School with a wooden playground. I went there one morning and they literally had caution tape up around the playground."

It wasn't a safe place for the children to play. Wanting to make a difference, Wight pulled together some of his crew and they went to work.

"We built them a brand new playground over the weekend," he said.

Wight and his wife, Daisy, 36, decided then that if a feasible time came, they were going to use their building experience to help others.

Now's the time. "I'll never get a chance like this again," the third-generation carpenter said.

Wight was contacted by ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" and given eight hours to decide if Broughman Builders was up for the task of building a home for the Ray-Smith family of Milbridge.

The owner immediately began calling companies he uses frequently at job sites, such as Ellsworth Builders Supply, R.F. Jordan and Sons Construction Inc., and Atlantic Landscape Construction Inc.

They didn't bat an eye, and four hours later Wight was back on the phone with "Extreme Makeover" producers saying he was up for the challenge.

Gearing up for the show and the build hasn't been easy.

Wight has put most of his

own business on hold, which is difficult with Maine's short construction season.

"If my clients weren't on board, we wouldn't be able to do this," Wight said.

Broughman Builders has eight foundations in the ground and ready for houses to go up, and eight more foundations are waiting to go in.

Wight said the support from his wife, who is vice president of Broughman Builders, and from his three small children also has been important.

The Wights have had to nearly halt construction on their own home in Ellsworth, and the "Extreme Makeover" project has taken Mike Wight away from home for long hours.

He's up at 4:30 a.m. and doesn't get home until 8:30 p.m., only to crawl into bed a short time later.

Although he said he's nervous about "everything," Wight has been able to get some advice along the way.

He visited and studied a

recent "Extreme Makeover" build in Minnesota, and a few conversations with David Gordon of Katahdin Cedar Log Homes also have helped.

Gordon was the builder when ABC brought the show to southern Maine two years ago.

"There's a lot of information that he shared that's been very helpful," Wight said.

At the site, Wight is responsible for the entire build and making sure everything stays on schedule.

"I'm right there the whole time," he said.

Some might say Wight is only in it for the exposure, "but that's not why we did it," Daisy Wight pitched in Friday as she sat beside her husband at the Broughman Builders showroom.

The opportunity does get the Broughman Builders name out there, but it's not about advertising, it's about helping a family and their children, Wight said.

"It's an honor. A complete honor," he said. "This is the Super Bowl of building."

Home

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an outdated septic system, no insulation, a cracking foundation, an outdated furnace that overheats, a leaky roof, freezing pipes, and electrical wiring that is a fire hazard.

On top of its structural issues, the Ray-Smith house allegedly is haunted.

According to information from Sutherland Weston Marketing Communications of Bangor, the public relations firm assisting in organizing the production locally, the resident spirit may have an affinity for sharp objects as the family has returned home to find scissors standing upright on the counter or shirt pins balanced in a circle in a candle.

In addition to the struggles the Ray-Smiths face with their home, medical bills have piled up and keep coming.

Thomas Ray-Smith, 8, has autism, and doctors say that although it's too early to tell for sure, Joseph "Jo-Jo" Ray-Smith, 3, likely is autistic as well.

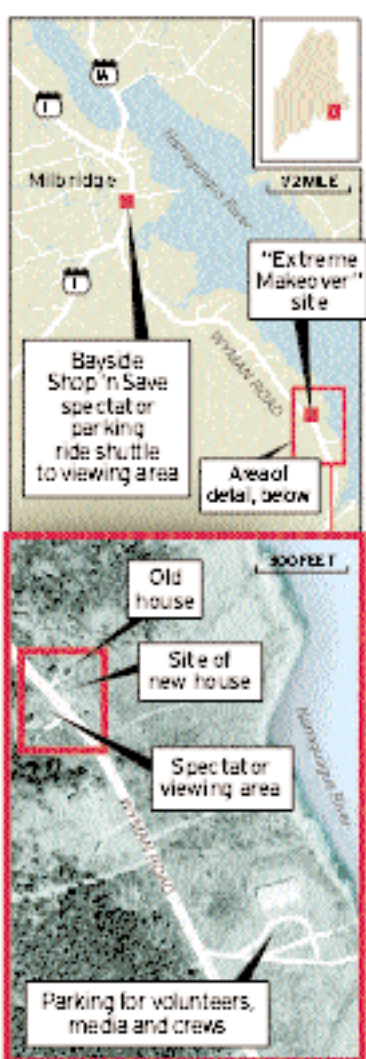
Representative of the impact autism has on the family, the building project has been named "Actions Speak Louder."

But it doesn't end there.

Both Ron Smith and his daughter, Bayley Ray-Smith, 11, suffer from hyperlipidemia, a condition causing extremely high cholesterol, which resulted in fatal heart attacks in Ron's mother and brother.

Another reason the family was selected from the five finalists considered for the show in Maine was their commitment to the community.

Brittany Ray was named Maine 2006 Teacher of the Year for her work as an English teacher at Narraguagus High School in Harrington. She was the first Washington County teacher ever to



"Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" Milbridge

ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" has come to Milbridge. Here's how to get there.

Directions from Ellsworth: Head southwest on U.S. Route 1A. Turn left onto High Street and follow U.S. Route 1 through Sullivan and Steuben to Milbridge.

Directions from Machias: Follow U.S. Route 1 through Jonesboro, Columbia Falls and Cherryfield to Milbridge. When you arrive

There will be signs to direct spectators to the parking area at Milbridge's Bayside Shop 'n Save where they will be shuttled by bus or can walk to the "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" construction site. Spectators cannot cross the road to the construction site, but photos and video taken from the spectator area are acceptable. Wyman Road will be closed to all but local and working traffic.

SOURCE: Sutherland Weston Marketing Communications
BANGOR DAILY NEWS MAP BY ERIC ZEJZ

How to help

Volunteers. Professional builders who want to volunteer to help build the Ray-Smith home may call Resa Beal at 460-1088. If you would like to volunteer in some other way, call Bobbi Harris at 546-7544, ext. 3317.

Monetary donations. Donations are being collected at all branches of Machias Savings Bank. Donations also can be mailed to Machias Savings Bank, P.O. Box 557, Ellsworth 04605. Checks should be made payable to the Ray-Smith Family Project.

For project updates, visit www.bangornews.com and click on the Reality Bytes blog icon for the latest information on progress at the construction site, in addition to information on what's needed for donations and volunteers. Information also will be available at www.extrememakeovermaine.com and www.broughmanbuilders.com.

receive the honor. In addition to her regular teaching duties, Ray now also serves as the high school's guidance counselor.

During her Teacher of the Year acceptance speech, Ray said she's not one for lots of attention or being in the spotlight.

For designer DiMeo, each family's story keeps his job fresh

BY AIMEE DOLLOFF
OF THE NEWS STAFF

"Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" carpenter Paul DiMeo enjoyed some quiet time by the ocean Sunday in between shooting scenes for the Milbridge episode. Legs casually crossed, DiMeo's guitar sat across his lap as he smoked a cigarette and occasionally sipped from a cup of coffee.

DiMeo has been with the show through all five seasons and usually is the first to shed a tear when the family's story is revealed to the design team. Although the idea behind the show is the same each week, DiMeo said it's easy to keep things fresh both for the audience and the crew.

"We have new families every week," he said. "It's a new build every week."

After recently filming the show's 100th episode, DiMeo said he has realized how short life is.

"The biggest thing I've learned is that life is random," he said. "It's a crapshoot. We're here one minute and we're gone the next."

DiMeo's favorite rooms to create are children's bedrooms where he can let his imagination run wild with any theme that's suitable.

"I like designing for anyone who's a kid, and that can be anyone between birth and death," he said.

Surprisingly, DiMeo doesn't have any children of his own, but he said it's always best to work on and be surrounded by what keeps us young.

Originally from Media, Penn., and the youngest son of five children, DiMeo attended Point Park College in Pittsburgh and majored in theater arts where he began working on sets and pursuing his love of acting.

He has starred in several off-Broadway productions, and while living in New York and Los Angeles, Calif., continued building sets and renovating old buildings.

DiMeo has a direct connection with the Ray-Smith family's story. Like Ron Smith and the couple's 11-year-old daughter, Bayley, DiMeo was diagnosed with high cholesterol several years ago and actively campaigns to raise awareness.

"We all have disabilities," he

Schedule

Monday, Sept. 10
Builder and design meetings and family moves out. No public spectator section open.

Tuesday, Sept. 11
Broughman Builders Inc. and crew march to the house and demolition begins. No public spectator section open.

Wednesday, Sept. 12, through Friday, Sept. 14
Construction under way. Public spectator section open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. each day.

Saturday, Sept. 15
Construction completed and furniture and appliances are moved in. Public spectator section open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 16
"Move that Bus" — new house revealed. The crowd will be filmed at 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. when the bus is moved.

said. "It's the overcoming of disabilities that's so interesting."

When meeting the Ray-Smith family, DiMeo was touched by Joseph "Jo-Jo" Ray-Smith's reaction to a simple balloon.

"I think there are gifts that come along with autism," he said.

Coming from a family of teachers, DiMeo also has a special respect for the work that Brittany Ray and Ron Smith do as teachers.

"I can't tell you who the twenty-second president of the United States was ... but I can tell you who my third-grade teacher was," DiMeo said.

DiMeo also is partial to the North East. While living in New York, he spent six months in Dover-Foxcroft and also has a fondness for blueberries.

"Look at what we're looking at," he said, pointing to the ocean.

Other members of the "Extreme Makeover" team on board for the Ray-Smith project include design team leader and host Ty Pennington, designers John Littlefield and Eduardo Xol, and newcomer Didiayer Snyder.



BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY GABOR DEGRE

Paul DiMeo, one of the original members of the cast of ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," is known for his passion for his work, shaping the children's rooms on the show. "I like designing for anyone who's a kid, and that can be anyone between birth and death," he said.

Killing of rare grizzly in Idaho investigated

BY KEITH RIDLER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOISE, Idaho — Federal and state wildlife officials said Friday they are investigating the killing of a grizzly bear in north-central Idaho, where the last confirmed sighting of the species was in 1946.

The bear, a member of a threatened species, was killed Monday by a hunter near Kelly Creek about three miles from the Montana border, said Steve Nadeau, statewide large carnivore manager for the Idaho fish and game department.

Nadeau said the bear was not confirmed as a grizzly until Friday, after the hunter and guide had packed it out of the remote, roadless area and contacted authorities.

Officials did not release the identities of the hunter or the guide, who was not present when the bear was killed.

Nadeau said the hunter, who is from Tennessee, was on a guided trip, hunting black bear with bait. Black bear hunting

season opened Aug. 30.

Nadeau said the male grizzly weighed 400 to 500 pounds and was 6 to 8 years old. The hunter and guide skinned the carcass and brought it out on horseback so it could be confirmed as a grizzly by authorities, Nadeau said.

It is now in the possession of state fish and game department.

In April, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lifted Endangered Species Act protections for grizzlies in and around Yellowstone National Park.

But the bear killed Monday was not part of that population, Nadeau said, and therefore retained federal threatened-species protection. He said that is why the investigation also involves federal authorities.

Asked whether the hunter would likely face penalties, Nadeau said the matter was under investigation.

Chris Servheen, Fish and Wildlife grizzly bear recovery coordinator, said the death was under investigation.